

Keep Your Heart Healthy: Tips to Get You Moving Every Day

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The American Heart Association recently released a science advisory warning people against the comfortable couch-potato life. We all know sitting for long periods of time isn't great for your health, but when most of us are working at a desk eight or more hours per day, how can we combat the plague of the sedentary lifestyle on a daily basis? Adam Maielua, lead fitness instructor at The Body Lab AZ, gives a few tips on how to stay active, keep your body healthy, and reduce the risk of heart disease.

AFM: How does sitting for long periods of time negatively affect the body?

AM: Sitting for prolonged periods may lead to poor posture and circulation which can contribute to muscular and joint issues as well as adverse metabolic conditions.

AFM: Typically how long is “too long” to be sitting down?

AM: Generally, a person should get up every 30 minutes. This may vary based on genetic and lifestyle differences, but such specifics have not been well researched.

AFM: How can we combat this? What tips do you have for people who have to remain seated for long stretches of time at their desks?

AM: We should create and take advantage of every opportunity to stand. Can you use a standing desk? Can you use a wireless headset for calls? Can you conduct one-on-one interactions while walking? We may find more opportunities than we realized.

AFM: What tips do you suggest for people with injuries or medical conditions who may not be able to move as easily as others?

AM: For individuals with physical limitations, she or he may be able to use a chair that encourages a more upright posture. If appropriate, compression socks or rolling the feet on golf balls may allow for improved circulation.

AFM: What are some simple exercises people can do on the go?

AM: Fitness on the go is about maintaining conditions, not progressing towards goals. Go for a brisk walk, lunge in place for two to five minutes, hold a plank for as long as possible--then do it again three more times.

AFM: Any recommendations for foods we should cut out?

AM: Try to eat foods that are cooked fresh, not pre-packaged. Try to make two-thirds to three-fourths of each meal produce and the rest protein. Limit heavy starches to two to three servings per week. Whole grains can be beneficial, but generally the American population does not eat enough produce.

Get acquainted with The Body Lab at thebodylabus.com and learn more about heart health at heart.org.